

REVIEWS

CLAUDE BERNARD, *PHYSIOLOGIST*. By J. M. D. Olmstead. Pp. 318. Plates 7. Cassell & Co., Ltd., London, 1939. Price 15s.

Whilst many are familiar with the outstanding contributions of Bernard to physiology, few are acquainted with him as a man. It is therefore interesting to read something of Bernard as a man.

The work falls naturally into two parts. In the first the author deals with the life of Bernard, and traces for us the rise of the pharmacist's apprentice in a remote district of France to the Chair of Medicine in the Collège de France, and finally to his seat in the Académie. Unhappy in his domestic life, wherein death claimed both his sons, and his wife became an ardent anti-vivisectionist, he flung himself into his work with renewed zeal and did much to establish physiology as the scientific basis of medicine. During his lifetime, and largely by his own efforts, he saw the transition from pure empiricism in the schools to experimental medicine. The more easily applied discoveries of Pasteur have tended to overshadow the contributions of Bernard, but the present volume does much to re-establish his relative position among the master-minds of medicine. He was the pioneer in the discovery of the functions of the pancreas in digestion, the glycogenic function of the liver, the vasomotor system, and of the action of curare and carbon monoxide. Not the least of his scientific contributions was the idea of constancy of the internal environment of the body. Judged in the light of any generation, Bernard's contributions have been great, and when the lack of facilities under which he laboured is considered, his work is seen reflected in the light of genius.

The author of the book is himself a physiologist, and the treatment given to Bernard's work is excellent. In spite, however, of the attempt to re-create the personality of the great physiologist he remains still rather vague, a rather impersonal figure not without weakness. The book is written in a clear style with abundant quotations from original sources, and will be of value to all who are interested in the outstanding figures of medical achievement.

TEXTBOOK OF MEDICAL TREATMENT. By various authors. Edited by D. M. Dunlop, M.D., F.R.C.P.Ed.; L. S. P. Davidson, M.D., F.R.C.P.Ed.; J. D. McNee, D.Sc., M.D., F.R.C.P. Foreword by A. J. Clarke, M.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.S. Pp. 1,127, 27 Figures, 4 Tables, 7 Plates, 8 Charts. 25s. net. Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone, 1939.

By far the most disappointing paragraphs of the average textbook of medicine are those dealing with treatment. The pathology, clinical symptoms, diagnosis, and prognosis are carefully and clearly enunciated, and then follows the vague and oftentimes contradictory paragraph on what after all is the chief function of the physician—the curative. Diagnosis may be accurate, but failing helpful general and specific treatment the patient has little to be thankful for.

To remedy this defect, a series of books has been published, and amongst them the present volume by eminent Scottish teachers is sure to find a high place. The fact that it is the patient who is sick and not merely one of his organs is borne in mind, and results in an excellent treatise on the general management of the patient, including diet, rest, exercise, nursing, and psychotherapy. There is no useless piling up of long lists of drugs of doubtful efficacy, but attention is concentrated on those which produce a recognisable effect and are of proven help in the combat of the disease process. The use of endocrine preparations and vitamins is also dealt with.

It is not forgotten that the potency of the newer drugs is a two-edged sword, and that they should be used with care and only when accurate diagnosis has established the necessity for their use.

It would be invidious to comment on individual articles. Twenty-seven teachers in Scottish

universities have contributed. Each writes with first-hand knowledge of his particular subject, and the completed volume is one which bears testimony to the high standards obtaining in Scottish medicine.

It is a great pity that the medical student with his over-burdened curriculum will scarcely have time to peruse these pages. Certainly it should be in the surgery of every general practitioner, where it will serve as an ever-ready source of knowledge in time of need.

TUBERCULOSIS AND NATIONAL HEALTH. By H. H. Thomson, M.D., D.P.H. 1939. London: Methuen & Co. Pp. 244. 10s. 6d. net.

This book was written with the idea of clarifying the present-day views on the epidemiological and sociological aspects of tuberculosis. Dr. H. Hyslop Thomson has spent his whole medical career in the study of this disease, and his views as now expressed in this book will therefore be exceedingly useful and interesting to the medical profession.

In speaking of incidence and significance of tuberculosis he states that the notification-rate and death-rate have both been steadily decreasing, giving the actual figures from 1933 onwards. It is also interesting to note that the proportion of deaths to notifications is also falling, i.e., 1 in 1.9 in 1933 to 1 in 2.1 in 1937. This shows that with the improvements in treatment and the facilities for such, together with present-day preventative methods, there are hopes that this once-dreaded disease will be one day among the minor problems in medicine. Dr. Thomson goes on to speak of different types of the disease, and of the etiology, discussing parental transmission, impaired resistance, influence of associated disease, and the relation of mental and physical strain. He also lays out in detail the questions of milk supply and diagnosis of tuberculosis in cattle.

The more important aspect, modern treatment and its aims and prevention, are extremely fully gone into, and in a manner which leaves no room for criticism. The book ends with a list of the author's conclusions, and on perusing them one is made to feel that there is still a great amount of work to be done. In his own words: "The sociological aspects of tuberculosis present a problem which can only be successfully solved with state aid and co-operation."

TREATMENT OF SOME COMMON DISEASES (MEDICAL AND SURGICAL).

By T. Rowland Hill, M.D., M.R.C.P.(Lond.). 1939. Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone. Pp. 398. 15s. net.

Dr. Rowland Hill is to be congratulated on the idea of compiling a book which is, in the true sense, not a textbook, but rather a series of monographs on the treatment of diseases which commonly form the problems of the general practitioner. In so doing he has been able to eliminate many subjects which, though essential in a book of reference, prove an encumbrance to the majority of medical textbooks, and has used the space so gained in a much more valuable manner.

The book is written by various authors from London hospitals, amongst whom are many well-known medical and surgical names and most of whom have reached the top in their particular branch of the profession. The book is written in a clear and easy style and is moreover well illustrated by both figures and X-ray plates. On the medical side various cardio-vascular and lung diseases are fully dealt with. A long article on digestive disorders in children follows. But to me the most interesting was that on anæmia, the classification and completeness of treatment leaving a marked impression. Another chapter on prophylactic treatment by active immunisation begins with a photograph of a tombstone inscribed thus:—"To the memory of Benjm. Jesty (of Downshay), who departed this life April 16th, 1816, aged 79 years." "He was born at Yetminster in this county, and was an upright, honest man: particularly noted for having been the first person (known) that introduced the cowpox by inoculation, and who from his great strength of mind made the experiment from the (cow) on his wife and two sons in the year 1774." The author discusses fully the value of